

CLEAN STAMBOUL STREETS

Dogs as Scavengers in Constantinople Play Important Part in Politics.

By EX-ATTACHE.

Any one who, like myself, has resided in the Orient will learn with regret of the decision on the part of the new Turkish government to abolish the famous dogs of Constantinople. If any attempt is made to put the new move into execution it is certain to lead to serious trouble, when the city fell into the hands of the Turks and became the capital of the Ottoman empire, when they may be said to have undergone transformation similar to that suffered by the great basilica of St. Sophia.

For if to-day the Moslems of Constantinople regard that ancient edifice as identified with the Mohammedan supremacy of that city, so do they connect in some superstitious manner the rule of Islam with the presence of the dogs. Indeed, every attempt to do away with them has resulted in riots, and the action of the new regime in proposing to abolish them is ascribed by the Ottomans to the presence of Christians and Jews among the members of the new Turkish party now in power. In fact, it is quite possible that the dogs may prove the rock upon which the existing government at Stamboul may yet come to grief.

Just why the government of Mahomet V should wish to do away with the dogs of Stamboul it is difficult to understand. Numbering considerably over 100,000, they have from the days of Emperor Justinian acted as the most efficient scavengers of Constantinople, contributing in no small degree to keeping relatively free from filth this great and populous city, which is without any vestige of sewerage or similar sanitary arrangements.

When in the early part of the nineteenth century Sultan Mahmud II, imbued with the zeal of Western reform and prompted by the advice of one of his Greek ministers, attempted to send up all the dogs and to ship them off to an island in the Sea of Marmora, the dirt and filth in the metropolis accumulated to such a degree that a terrible epidemic of cholera, which was regarded by the inhabitants in the light of a divine punishment, and they would not rest until their four-footed street cleaners had been restored to them.

Some forty years later another attempt was made to rid the city of the dogs, this time by an Ottoman chief of police, who had been educated at Paris. He undertook to deport the dogs in batches and by degrees to various points of the coast. But as soon as the people learned about the matter, and, moreover, were made aware that the first shipment had been deliberately driven overboard and drowned as soon as the vessel had entered the straits into the Black Sea, they rose in their wrath against the police commissioner and literally tore him to pieces.

Again, on the accession of Sultan Murad to the throne in 1909 an American glove manufacturer, encouraged by the ultra-liberal doctrines and foreign reforms inaugurated by the Midhat Pasha administration, submitted a scheme to the government to do away with the dogs, whose hides he proposed to utilize in his trade. But although he offered to pay some 20 cents per dog into the state treasury, which was empty at the time, the ministers were afraid to accept the proposal lest it should excite a popular rising, thereby adding to their troubles.

Indeed, it is a question whether the knowledge that some such plan was under the consideration of the Sultan did not lead to the religious movement that culminated in his deposition and in the accession of his brother, Abdul Hamid. It would be strange indeed, but is not altogether impossible, if Mahomet V were in turn to lose his throne owing to the indignation excited among the Moslems of Constantinople by the action of his government—which is very unorthodox in its eyes—in abolishing the dogs of Stamboul.

Certainly it would be foolish to dream of dispensing with their services until some satisfactory means had been devised and completed for the drainage and the cleansing of the streets of the Turkish metropolis, where all the filth and all the dogs are thrown into the roadways. There are no sewers, and even no gutters to speak of. Moreover, the Turks, though most cleanly in their person and raiment, have none of the Western horror of dirt where their houses and their surroundings are concerned.

It is well-nigh impossible to induce even soldiers in barracks to avoid littering their rooms and the courtyards with detritus of one kind and another, while before the people could be taught the use of even the ordinary American garbage can generations must elapse. It is so much less trouble and more natural to get rid of by throwing it into the street filth which it has become impossible to retain in the house.

Imagine this in a city of over a million inhabitants, where Oriental fatalism is carried to such a degree that the mother will not even take the trouble to shoo away the flies that are massed about her baby's eyes, contaminating them with the germs of ophthalmia. Constantinople is a terribly dirty city at the best. Without its four-footed scavengers it would under existing circumstances become unfit for human habitation and so great a hotbed of every kind of plague as to call for the intervention of the foreign powers, not for political reasons, but on sanitary grounds.

While these dogs of Stamboul, which in appearance have something of the common prick-eared sheep dog of the Balkans, mingled with a strain of the wolf, of the jackal, and of the lynx in their ancestry, are extremely useful, they are perfectly harmless. No one has ever known them to injure either grown-up citizens or even children. And although besotten, born, and brought up in the street, their food filth and refuse of every description, their drink, when they can get it, restricted to the stagnant, muddy puddles, yet they are absolutely immune from hydrophobia. No case of rabies has ever been heard of in Constantinople. Horses and cattle are equally safe from them. In fact, the only living things that they will attack are their own species or else vermin, such as rats, mice, etc.

They are not good-looking. They may be described as ill-conditioned in appearance, save when quite young. But even the image, which is their principal enemy, does not assume the proportions among them that one would imagine from their complete freedom from all human care and control. Indeed, it would appear as if constant exposure to bitter cold and torrid heat, to rain and to snow, to hunger and thirst, combined with unrestricted liberty, were more efficient antidotes to canine maladies than medicine, shelter, and regular food. Some Turks affirm that this comparative absence of disease

among the dogs is attributable to a certain marvelous instinct. "They seem to be aware," I have been told, "when animals of their species are about to be afflicted with some sickness, and, losing no time, fall upon the doomed brute and devour him."

Yes, this as it may, it is nevertheless true that no dead dog is ever seen lying about the streets. With the enormous canine population of Constantinople, some of them must be dying every day of the year. Yet no one that I have met and have asked about the matter can ever recall to have seen a dead one. What becomes of their bodies? The people would not take the trouble to remove them; that is left to the four-footed scavengers themselves, who, it must be assumed, are responsible for the elimination of the carcasses of their brethren, along with the other filth.

Nobody ever kills any of these parish dogs in Constantinople. The Christians do not dare to do so for fear of provoking Moslem wrath, while the Mohammedans believe that misfortune will befall him if he destroys that to which Allah has given life. Formerly, indeed, the killing of one of these dogs, even by accident, was a statutory offense, punishable by imprisonment, and unless I am much mistaken, these laws are still in existence, though there has been little occasion within my knowledge for their application.

It is true that one occasionally sees a dog with a maimed leg. But this is due to the fact that they will insist upon lying stretched at full length in the narrow streets, and that with carriages traveling along at full speed they do not always have the time to get out of the way. Much as the dog of Constantinople will lie in the center of the roadway, basking in the sun, sometimes whole batches of them, he is never known to take a siesta on the tracks of the many tram car lines which now criss-cross Stamboul.

Their ears are also usually in a very dilapidated condition. This is due to the fact that when they fight they always endeavor to grab one another's ears and that when once they get a good grip they never let go until they carry off a mouthful.

These fights are usually caused by trespass. Every one who has been to Constantinople knows that the dogs have, through some agreement of their own, divided up the huge city into a number of districts with sharply defined boundaries, invisible to the human eye and yet plain as the nose on the animal. In the older parts of the town these boundaries have existed without change from time immemorial. But as the metropolis grows in area new districts are occupied by the dogs, and new frontier lines devised, which shows that they are progressive. It is difficult to make a dog leave his district.

I have often discussed the matter with my old friend, the late Laurence Oliphant. He, too, was much interested in these dogs and fond of them, and when living at Constantinople would always speak to them kindly. They readily respond to any kind word, even if it be in an unknown tongue, and soon get to know and to recognize the speaker to such an extent that when he appears in their particular district they will accompany him, with every sign of friendship and satisfaction, up their household steps, and if by any chance they venture to overstep it, which is rare, at once the dogs from the adjacent district rush to the scene and hurl themselves upon the intruder.

The reason why the dogs appreciate kindly speech is because, although the Moslem will not permit the dog to be harmed or killed, with the dogs, when used as a useful instrument of sanitation, nevertheless considers him in the light of an unclean animal. That is why these dogs of Constantinople are so different to those of this country. Here we keep dogs as our companions, as members of our households. But the Stamboul dogs are dependent upon their own resources, answerable to no one but themselves, masterless, and while not subject to man, yet constituting with him an integral and very useful element of the population of the Turkish metropolis.

Wonderful tales are told of the sagacity of these dogs. While the fighting which preceded the deposition of Abdul Hamid was in progress in the streets of Constantinople they disappeared from view in the most miraculous manner, without leaving any trace, reappearing, however, as soon as the conflict was at an end.

I recall an English lady whom I used to know in Paris. She possessed a very handsome sky terrier, but it was impossible to let the little fellow out for exercise or account to the parish dogs in the street. To obviate this she conceived the scheme of providing a plentiful meal for them daily, at which the little terrier was always present. Through this means

At the top on the left is shown Mrs. Herman Oelrich, and on the right Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr. Lower pictures show Mrs. O. H. Belmont, mother of W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., who is also shown. Marble palace, the Newport residence of Mrs. Belmont, which she will occupy with her sons this summer. Mrs. Vanderbilt is now with her sister, Mrs. Oelrich, while Mr. Vanderbilt has taken up his residence at his Newport club.

MAUD ADAMS AS JOAN OF ARC.



First photo ever taken of famous actress in role of French heroine. She appeared in the play in the Stadium at Harvard University last Tuesday.

(Copyright, 1909, by Charles Frohman.)

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It is Mr. Chanute's belief that in the perfect flying machine of the future for one man, no motor at all will be needed, and he says the indications are that this will be achieved before very long. He is willing, he adds, to furnish further information to any aviator who may attempt the feat of soaring.

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